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ABSTRACT

The concept presented in this document offers an alternative to the traditional structure and ideology of the community college. The "learning college" is based on the assumption that learning experiences are designed to meet the needs and convenience of students rather than those of the institution, its faculty, and staff. Six key principles of the learning college include: (1) creating change in individual learners; (2) allowing learners assuming primary responsibility for their choices; (3) providing multiple options for learning; (4) creating collaborative learning activities; (5) defining roles of learning facilitators; and (6) developing facilitator skills to improve the learning experience. From these principles cross-institutional groups, composed of trustees, presidents, and staff, should consider what needs must be addressed by community colleges in Michigan if they are to become learning colleges. Seven organizational change ideas resulted from a wide-ranging discussion of this type, with the determination being that if a learning college is to exist, there must be: (1) a culture of change; (2) trustee commitment and involvement in the change process; (3) employee commitment and support; (4) a definition of the learning expected, with articulated outcomes; (5) appropriate curricular and delivery methods; (6) collaboration with diverse groups; and (7) a revised organizational structure. The implementation ideas presented in this monograph are offered as a beginning, with a clear assertion that becoming a learning college is indeed a process. (AS)

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# BECOMING A LEARNING COLLEGE

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CHANGE

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MCCA Winter Inservice

January 30 1998



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# PREFACE

This monograph is the result of a collaborative initiative—one that involves the 28 community colleges in the state of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Michigan Community College Association. The collaborative began as an idea in early 1996 as representatives from Michigan State University and Michigan's community colleges grappled with the challenges presented by the unrelenting pace of change impacting their organizations. Leveraging resources, through the talents available at both MSU and the community colleges, was seen as one way to productively address the changes.

THE IDEA GENERATORS

Patsy Fulton-Calkins was employed by MSU to coordinate the collaborative efforts between MSU and the 28 community colleges. The project was a result of an expressed interest on the part of Michigan State University, with MSU leadership understanding the need for collaborative efforts to address the changes facing both entities. Appreciation goes to these individuals for their vision.

Peter McPherson, President, MSU
Lou Anna Simon, Provost, MSU
Jim Votruba, formerly Vice Provost for University Outreach, MSU (presently President of Northern Kentucky University)
Robert Church, Acting Vice Provost for University Outreach

THE COLLABORATORS

Thanks are extended to the presidents of the community colleges and the administrative leadership at MSU (names of each individual appear in the Appendix) who not only supported the idea but have been willing to give numerous hours to the task of trying to make a collaborative work—a task that has not always been easy. As Jean Lipmun-Bluman in **The Connective Edge** (1996) points out, interdependence is accelerating at a furious pace in our world. Yet, there is often a clash between individualism and interdependence that results in our clinging to "the old" due to the inability to deal with the more collaborative ideal. Certainly, as we have attempted to forge ahead on this journey of collaboration between MSU and the community colleges of the State, the road has not always been smooth. However, we persevere.

**Strategic Thinking Task Force**

The Strategic Thinking Task Force, one of the five task forces established as a result of the collaborative, provided the idea and direction for this conference. Names of individuals who comprise this task force, along with a brief description of the work of the task force, are listed in the Appendix. Also listed in the Appendix are the other task forces that have been part of this collaborative.

**Additional Collaborators**

In planning this first leadership session, the collaborative became even broader with the addition of Michigan Community College Association (Tom Bernthal, President) and graduate students from MSU. This greater collaborative provided input from the community college trustees in addition to the community college presidents and staff. The session was held during the MCCA Winter Inservice, January 30, 1998.

**Plenary Session Speaker**

Terry O'Banion, executive director of the League for Innovation in the Community College, a prolific writer on community college issues and author of **A Learning College for the 21st Century,** (1997) was the plenary session speaker. His insights provided a thought-provoking beginning to the conference. In breakout sessions held after Dr. O'Banion's presentation, community college trustees, presidents, and staff discussed how learning colleges might be built at their own sites.

# ARNING COLLEGE

The continual changes that are occurring in our world today offer community college leaders numerous challenging opportunities. These changes are being driven by several forces, with some of the major ones being:

- technological advances that are occurring at almost breakneck speed;
- a global world that affords increased collaborative possibilities;
- greater diversity among the audiences who are served by the community college; and
- increasing expectations for public institutions by our stakeholders.

Recognizing the impact of these changes and the importance of coming together to begin a discussion to address the changes, the Strategic Thinking Task Force (composed of community college presidents and MSU faculty) conceived this conference. Accepting Max DePree's statement in **Leadership is an Art:** "... we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are," we began this collaborative conference with an often espoused but difficult to implement premise:

> Community colleges, if they are to serve their communities optimally in the next millennium, must not only be willing to examine their role in a changing environment but be willing to make the necessary changes in their organizations to support their role.

From this premise, two questions emerged:

- What will the successful community college of the future be?
- Once we envision this college, how do we build it?

The answer, by some of our respected community college leaders, to what the successful community college of the future will be is: **It will be a Learning College.** The learning college concept builds on Peter Senge's seminal work in **The Fifth Discipline** (1990) as he asserts that the successful corporation of the future will be the **learning corporation.** Learning becomes the key for moving organizations into the 21st century. Acceptance of this idea demands major change—change that requires a total reexamination of the community college and alters our thinking and planning for the future.

## BEGINNING: THE LEARNING COLLEGE CONCEPT

Dr. Terry O'Banion, the plenary session speaker for the conference and one of the major proponents of the **learning college** concept, placed several key concepts before us for consideration, debate, and discussion during the conference. A brief overview of these ideas is presented here. Further detail and explanation can be found in both his booklet entitled **Creating More Learning-Centered Community Colleges** (1997), distributed at the conference, and in his book, **A Learning College for the 21st Century** (1997).

### Placing Learning First

O'Banion suggests that placing learning first is not as apparent as we think in policies and practices within our community colleges today. Although mission statements often stress the importance of teaching, the key element—learning—is frequently not mentioned. Internal policies and practices place an emphasis on teaching; i.e., teaching excellence awards and evaluations that assess teaching excellence. O'Banion points out that today, for the first time in the history of education, the cry of educators has become—place learning and the learner first.

### Overhauling Educational Architecture

As we move into the 21st Century, continuing to perpetuate a collegiate architecture based on the traditional, agrarian, industrial model hinders our ability to be truly responsive to today's college student. A new model(s) must be envisioned, and only through acknowledging that a change in educational architecture needs to occur will real change happen. We need to recognize the degree to which our present educational practices are time-bound, place-bound, bureaucracy-bound, and role-bound before we can truly create a new learning environment. Clear evidence of O'Banion's criticisms can be seen in these aspects of our present institutions:

- Course scheduling time blocks and academic calendar years are rooted in agrarian economic models and false understandings of how learning occurs (time-bound).
- "School is a place" (O'Banion, 1995-96), making it difficult to envision alternate forms of educational delivery and even different locations for traditional delivery (place-bound).
- Reliance upon rules and regulations, which routinize learning processes for all learners and policies designed to make efficient what is in effect bad practice, wreak havoc on reform efforts (bureaucracy-bound).
- Teachers are the purveyors of knowledge and students the recipients, which leads logically to a teacher-centered educational experience rather than anything that reflects the needs, interests, and personal knowledge of the learner (role-bound).

### The Learning College

O'Banion offers an alternative to the present structure and ideology of the community college—the learning college. The learning college is based on the assumption that learning experiences are designed to meet the needs and convenience of students rather than those of the institution, its faculty, and staff. The six key principles of the learning college are:

- The learning college creates substantive change in individual learners.
- The learning college engages learners in the learning process as full partners, assuming primary responsibilities for their own choices.
- The learning college creates and offers as many options for learning as possible.
- The learning college assists learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities.
- The learning college defines the roles of learning facilitators by the needs of the learners.
- The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for its learners.

## CREATING LEARNING COLLEGES IN MICHIGAN

From the key points presented in the plenary session, cross-institutional groups, composed of trustees, presidents, and staff, considered what would need to be addressed by community colleges in Michigan if they are to become learning colleges. The questions discussed were:

- What will the learning college for the year 2003 look like?
- What are the barriers and obstructions that we face when building the learning college?

Seven key organizational change ideas resulted from a wide-ranging discussion, with the determination being that if a learning college is to exist there must be:

- **A culture of change.**
- **Trustee commitment and involvement in the change process.**
- **Employee commitment and support.**
- **A definition of the learning expected, with articulated outcomes.**
- **Appropriate curricular and delivery methods.**
- **Collaboration with diverse groups.**
- **A revised organizational structure.**

These key organizational change ideas are not presented in a specific order. Yet, it is worth noting that creating a culture of change is listed first because of its fundamentally important role in creating change. O'Banion and other leadership and change authors— Birnbaum (1988), Leslie & Fretwell (1996), Senge (1990)—would argue that one of the flaws in systemic change and educational reform initiatives has been the pattern of focusing first on structural adaptation. A clearly defined purpose must exist before considering structural change; to do otherwise results in **only** tinkering around the edges. Without cultural change, there is no shift in institutional orientation from teaching-centered to learning-centered, no substantive change in learning outcomes, and no sense that things are anything other than business as usual.

## MOVING FROM CREATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

In the afternoon session, institutional groups convened to discuss more specific goals for implementing organizational change. The specific questions posed to the groups were:

- How do we go about implementing organizational change ideas?
- How do we make change happen in our own institutions?

Although it was not the intent of the discussion to generate consensus across institutions, group agreement was sought. What resulted was a rich, ambitious, and important set of change agendas that provide insight into the future challenges facing institutions as they pursue a vision of the Michigan Learning College, as well as potential foundations for on-site discussion and action planning.

## CREATING A CULTURE OF CHANGE

**Vision**

- Encourage shared goals and vision within the organization by developing a vision statement with broad input from all stakeholders.
- Establish new cultural norms.

**Organizational Climate**

- Develop an atmosphere of trust and open communication.
- Value inquiry.
- Encourage creative thinking about new possibilities for the organization.
- Establish a climate where being "stuck in the past" is not acceptable.
- Push the organization to new heights.
- Support risk taking.
- Allow room for failure while learning from failure.
- Create a climate of respect.
- Provide for emotional and spiritual growth in the change process.
- Empower individuals.

**Process**

- Establish a change process that is understood by all stakeholders.
- Allow opportunities for dialogue to create a common understanding of the change process.
- Provide resources to support change.
- Reduce the barriers between groups.

**Making It Happen**

As the community college creates a culture of change through vision, organizational climate, and a process that is continual, caveats for success include (but are not limited to) the following:

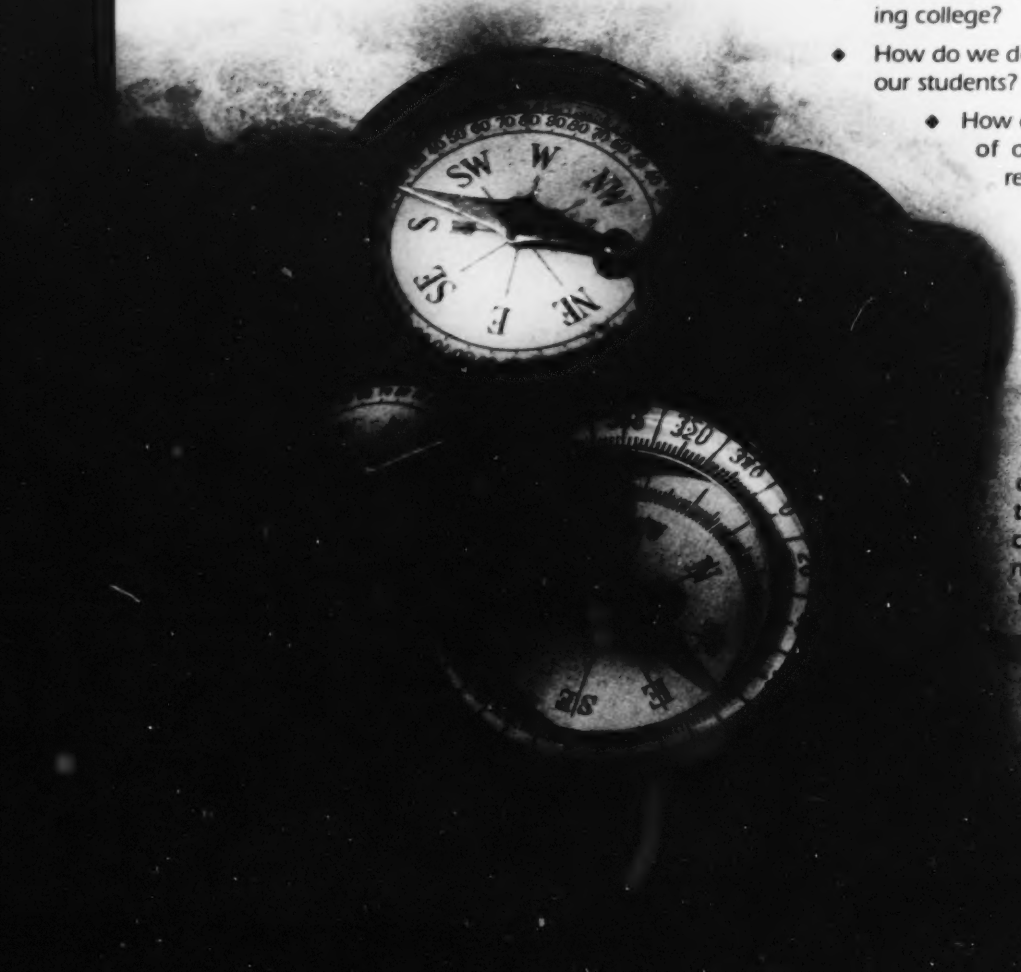
- A strong statement of support for organizational change from the Board of Trustees, the president, and upper level administration.
- A vision statement developed, understood, and supported by all members of the organization. The vision is the very essence of the organization. According to Kotter in **Leading Change** (1996): "Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible, and time-consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all." The vision must be so fully lived by all members that it is:
  - used when making all major decisions, with the question being: Will this decision support our vision?
  - constantly on the "tip of the tongue" of all members of the organization.
  - understood by the external community.
- An ongoing strategic planning process that includes reexamination of the total organization.
- An ongoing professional development initiative that stresses creativity, innovation, and a willingness to move to new heights, while disdaining resistance to positive change.
- The members of the organization demonstrate the power of connectedness—to self, to individuals within the organization, and to the larger good of the organization as a whole.
- The process is continual and allows for input from all college stakeholders.
- Successes in moving to a learning culture are published on the Web and/or in an in-house newsletter and celebrated by the organization through recognition of individuals at special events.

# AFFIRMING THE TRUSTEES' ROLE IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

The Board of Trustees must work together to promote commitment and development opportunities for each of its members.

**Commitment**

- Establish Board commitment to a learning college.
- Become change agents for the learning college by:
  - setting the pace for the college community;
  - empowering the president to address change issues;
  - developing external links consistent with changing community needs;
  - maintaining accountability to the larger community for serving its diverse needs.



**Development Opportunities**

- Encourage all trustees to become continual learners.
- Provide opportunities for the trustees to become more knowledgeable of the learning college concept.

**Making It Happen**

If the Board of Trustees is to be committed to the learning college concept and become change agents for the learning college, its members must operate with clarity around their vision/mission/values and as a cohesive board. The board must be clear about its own role, how it carries out this role, and how it speaks with one voice about the role. The board must also be willing to hold the administration of the organization accountable for becoming a learning college. The tough questions must be asked of administrators; e.g.

- Do our vision/mission/value statements support a learning college?
- How do we document that learning has occurred for our students?
- How do we understand and meet the needs of our external constituencies—local, regional, and global?
- Does our organizational structure support a learning college?

In coming together as a cohesive group to seek the answers to the **right** questions, the board might want to examine its own values, how those values support a learning college, and how the values are lived in board decision making. As the board commits to its professional growth in these areas, it might seek to do so collaboratively with the external community it serves and even with other community college boards in its region.

# GROWING EMPLOYEES FOR THE LEARNING COLLEGE

**Identified Qualifications**

- Determine qualifications and credentials needed for administrators, faculty, and staff, with these traits suggested as essential:
  - Demonstrated support of the vision/mission/values of the college;
  - Team player who is able to work across traditional disciplines;
  - Knowledgeable concerning technical applications that may be applied to the environment;
  - Both learner and teacher;
  - Documented innovator;
  - Solid communication skills, with listening of major importance;
  - Demonstrated leadership skills;
  - Respect for diversity;
  - Nurturing characteristics.
- Ensure that counselors/advisors have both pedagogical and discipline expertise that develop the learner.

**Professional Development**

- Provide professional development to support the learning college, with the objective of the development activities being to:
  - Develop administrators, faculty, and staff as continual learners;
  - Assist counselors/advisors in developing the student learner.

**Contract/Evaluation Standards**

- Develop fluid/flexible job descriptions that are constantly evaluated and changed as organizational needs shift.
- Renegotiate relevant provisions of the faculty contract to make it more conducive to learning and teaching.
- Link contracts to college and learners' goal attainment.
- Develop and administer on-going evaluations tied to vision/mission/values/goals of the college.

**Making It Happen**

Growing employees for the learning college centers on the commitment of top-level administrators to:

- hold fast to the vision of the learning college as all employees are hired;
- provide the ongoing support and professional development needed; and
- modify the human resources policies and procedures in support of the learning college vision.

Clearly, the task is not for the faint of heart. It demands careful consideration by those individuals involved in the hiring process of the qualifications needed **before** the job vacancy notice is prepared. As the Pew Roundtable members suggest (**Change,** 1996), it is essential to rethink the roles of the employees within the organization, taking into account the changes in knowledge, in students, and in the public's expectations of the services higher education should provide.

It demands careful attention **during** the interviewing process to ensure that all applicants demonstrate or provide documented evidence of their qualifications. It demands ongoing communication and professional development with appropriate union representatives **before** contracts are negotiated. It demands a human resources department that is able to **assist** the individuals within the organization to develop the necessary policies and procedures for the learning college. Finally, it demands the:

- development of evaluative instruments for both teams and individuals that reflect the vision/mission/values/goals of the college,
- professional development for supervisory employees on problem solving, team facilitation, coaching, communication skills, and conducting evaluation sessions,
- communication with all members of the organization as to the evaluative documents.

# DEFINING LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

**Definition**

- Define learning at the macro level. Inherent in the learning college is the continual learning of the total organization. The overarching question is: **What does learning mean for the organization?**
- Define learning at the micro level. **What does learning mean for individuals within the organization? (students and employees)**

**Dialogue**

- Engage in dialogue within the organization and the external communities on the meaning of learning.
- Focus on the complementary nature of learning and teaching, stressing the need for continual learners at all levels.
- Address the emotional and spiritual, in addition to the cognitive or intellectual, domains of the learning process.
- Assist learners in taking control over their own learning as informed decision makers; i.e., becoming active rather than passive learners—self-directed rather than other-directed.
- Stay focused on the question: **Does this activity expand student learning?**

**Procedure**

- Develop a core curriculum that stresses the importance of the learner becoming a successful citizen in our rapidly changing world, with emphasis on lifelong learning.
- Shift external student rewards for learning from credits received to credentials and competencies acquired.
- Establish tracking systems to gather outcomes and success data.
- Revise the curriculum based on the data.
- Develop counselors/advisors who can assist learners in becoming informed decision-makers rather than providing step-by-step procedures for the learner.

**Assessment**

- Determine essential outcomes through collaborative methods; e.g., interdisciplinary faculty approaches, with student involvement.
- Develop methods to assist students in defining valid, realistic learning outcomes.
- Close the gap between students' readiness for employment and workplace expectations; i.e., document problems, collect data, analyze and consider alternatives, and address issues.

**Resources**

- Support the personnel needed for the process of developing the curriculum and producing expected outcomes.
- Provide venture capital for innovators in the learning process.

**Reward and Celebrate**

- Reward those who are the greatest contributors to learning.
- Celebrate learning successes within the total organization.

**Making It Happen**

Defining learning at both the macro and micro levels is not an easy task; it involves soul-searching dialogue with all members of the college community—faculty, administrators, and staff. Palmer in **The Courage to Teach** (1998) states that "teachers possess the power to create conditions that can help students learn a great deal—or keep them from learning much at all." Although teachers are clearly the ones who interact more with students than other individuals within the college, the point can be made that administrators and staff also possess the power to help students learn or to keep them from learning. To appropriately define learning, all members of the college community, including students, must be willing to engage in dialogue that examines learning as an integrated process. In building a learning college, the capacity to learn must exist at all levels and with a depth that engages the whole individual—mind, body, and spirit.

In addition to defining learning, the assessment of learning is crucial. Although community college educators for many years have understood the importance of outcomes assessment, the task of developing realistic outcomes can be difficult. Contributing to its difficulty is the diversity of community college students, along with the diversity of their educational goals. Although the 18-19 year olds remain the largest percentage of the community college population in Michigan, with 21 percent of our students in this age range (1997 Michigan Community Colleges Enrollment Profile), there are significant numbers attending community colleges in the other age ranges:

- 17 percent of our students are 20-21;
- 13.5 percent 22-24;
- 14 percent 25-29;
- 3 percent 50-64.

These students' goals range from immediate employment to transfer to lifelong learning. Although these diverse goals are not new to the community college, we can expect to see more of our students in the lifelong learning goal category due to the rapidly changing economic and social context. According to Dolence and Norris in **Transforming Higher Education** (1995):

> ...futurists estimate that just to keep even each individual in the workforce will need to accumulate learning equivalent to that currently associated with 30 credit hours of instruction, every seven years. This level of learning will be needed for every member of the Information Age workforce who wishes to remain competitive and productive—perhaps even to maintain basic employment.

Such a statistic demands that community colleges, if they are to effectively establish outcome measures for this group of individuals, collaborate with business and industry not only as single colleges in Michigan, but also on a regional or State basis. For example, as community colleges work with the state in expanding the pool of trained workers for the automotive, furniture, plastics, and tourism industries, regional and state collaboration becomes essential as distance learning courses are developed for this market. Additionally, as community colleges develop their own Virtual Community College Network, outcomes assessment must be addressed collaboratively.

# PROVIDING APPROPRIATE CURRICULAR AND DELIVERY METHODS

**Curriculum**

- Provide innovative, face-to-face courses using multimedia.
- Cluster students with like learning needs.
- Integrate the curriculum, removing barriers between occupational and transfer courses.
- Collaborate with business and industry in building curriculum.
- Establish demonstration models, with support from legislative bodies and accrediting agencies, to test new learning models.

**Delivery**

- Develop delivery methods that allow access for all populations.
- Create one-stop content and service centers.
- Create seamless learning systems with K-12, universities, business/industry, and community agencies.
- Provide flexible educational opportunities that are not site- and time-bound.

**Resources**

- Establish incentives for faculty to develop diverse delivery strategies.
- Provide human, fiscal, facility, and technological resources needed to support the curriculum and delivery methods.

**Making It Happen**

If the student is to be served most effectively, the community college curriculum cannot be viewed as isolated courses with no connection among them. Critics of higher education have noted that the disciplinary approach of colleges is completely out of step with a time in which complexity and multi-disciplinarity reign. One Michigan initiative, the Michigan Academic/Occupational Curriculum Integration Project, focuses on connections between disciplines, faculties, K-12 and college staffs, and business/industry partnerships. Presently 15 of the 28 community colleges have joined the initiative through the identification of pilot projects that require the integration of content from the liberal arts, sciences, and occupational areas. Two examples of projects are Macomb's Accounting, Manufacturing, and English tandem mini-courses and the development of curricula to address the national manufacturing skills standards at Grand Rapids and Northwestern.

Another effort in Michigan modeled after the work initiated at Evergreen College with the Washington State Community Colleges is the learning community model. Delta College has been instrumental in the state in utilizing this model. The model allows instructors from two or three disciplines to collaborate in the coordination of content and assignments to reinforce the linkages between subjects. Not only is the linkage in content enhanced, but the sense of community among students is also enhanced. One example of a learning community at Delta is the English, Philosophy, and Nursing combination, called the Rites, Rights, and Writes of Nursing.

In addition to collaboration across disciplines, the community colleges must be working carefully with business and industry to provide the appropriate curriculum. According to McCabe in **The American Community College: Nexus for Workforce Development**, "Today, most Americans fall dramatically short of attaining the skills necessary to be competitive in the workplace." If community colleges are to be successful in assisting with developing a trained workforce, they must collaborate with business and industry on the curriculum to be offered and the methods of delivery most beneficial for the audiences being served. Successful workforce training efforts include:

- Cross-functional curricular teams from education and business.
- Task analysis of skills needed for the job, including human skills, basic skills, and technical skills.
- Integrated methodologies, including distance learning.
- One-stop operations that provide for career counseling, admission, financial aid, and assessment.
- Accountability for results through learner goal attainment.

# COLLABORATING WITH DIVERSE GROUPS

**Educational Partners**

- Other community colleges, both on a regional, statewide and national basis; e.g., Continuous Quality Improvement Network (COIN) or League for Innovation.
- Four-year colleges and universities, middle schools, and high schools within the state.

**Government Agencies**

- Local government agencies.
- State government.
- Federal agencies; e.g., U.S. Department of Education, Bureau of Labor.

**Business /Industry and Non-Profits**

- Local and regional business and non-profits.
- State business and non-profits.

**Board of Trustee Collaborations with:**

- Community boards.
- State boards.

**Making It Happen**

Although community colleges have for years collaborated with diverse community groups, today that collaboration must increase to regional and state collaboration with each other, four-year colleges, universities, business and industry, and non-profits. In addition, possibly even collaborative efforts with neighboring states might be pursued as we move beyond competition to connectedness. Dolence and Norris in **Transforming Higher Education** (1995) offer this view of where we are moving:

> We are moving from our existing, Industrial Age model for education to a learning vision for the 21st century—a vision that is fundamentally realigned with the needs of learners in the Information Age. The pathway from the existing world, where colleges and universities substantially "own" the teaching franchise, leads to a world where the learning franchise is spread among many providers and new types of facilitators, learning agents, and intermediaries.

Collaboration is challenging; it requires that we think and act differently. Jean Lipman-Blumen in **The Connective Edge** (1996) suggests that collaborative actions include:

- Connecting and combining rather than attempting to divide and conquer.
- Overcoming mutual problems instead of common enemies.
- Creating a sense of community where diverse groups can hold valued membership.
- Bringing together committed leaders and constituents for common purposes.
- Joining with other leaders, even former adversaries, as colleagues, not as competitors.

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# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

**Integration**

- Integrate services and disciplines.
- Integrate academic and occupational disciplines.
- Support flexible individual roles that blend across traditional lines, curriculum, and services.

**Structure**

- Reduce organizational layers; flatten the hierarchy.
- Build an agile organization—one that can move quickly, effectively, and is capable of supporting a regional, state, and world market.
- Provide a structure that allows for teams to form and disappear as needs change.
- Develop a structure that allows for learning to be delivered in a variety of ways; e.g., learning communities, cross-discipline instruction, team teaching, and distance education.
- Build a climate where it is understood that the organizational structure constantly shifts and molds itself to meet the needs of the constituencies served. The organizational structure is not a constant in the world of the 21st Century.

**Empowerment**

- Empower individuals at all levels; reduce interference of administrators, unions, and even the culture.
- Recognize significant contributors.
- Create a mentoring program for all employees.
- Institute roundtable meetings to discuss change issues.

**Innovation**

- Create a college within a college to pilot/model new initiatives.
- Support the innovative units of the college with appropriate resources.

**Making It Happen**

Structure viewed and established in isolation will not ensure a learning college. If a learning college is to be a reality, the structure must support the vision, the values, and strategic directions of the college. David Ponitz, past president of Sinclair College, in **A Learning College for the 21st Century** (1997) offers these essential characteristics of a learning college structure:

- Facilitates/coordinates/communicates.
- Creates cross-functional teams.
- Recognizes need for informality/user friendly.
- Evolves.
- Provides bridges.
- Decentralizes.
- Empowers/encourages.
- Encourages collective process ownership/ours vs. mine.

## SUMMING IT UP

The conference participants thoughtfully challenged the traditional mode of community college operation and offered seven collaboratively conceived components for building learning colleges in Michigan. Although barriers and obstacles to achieving a learning college were boldly brought forward, the thrusts of the collective conversations were around "making the learning college a reality." The implementation ideas identified by the groups and presented in this monograph were offered as a beginning, with a clear realization that becoming a learning college is indeed a process—one in which community college staff and the constituencies served are constantly growing, changing, and evolving.

Another important point to note that was apparent from the conversations of this conference is:

Building a learning college involves systemic change.

There are no quick fixes. It demands constant attention and repeatedly asking these questions:

- Is our college becoming a learning institution? How? If not, why not?
- Are we staying focused on the question: **Are our efforts expanding learning for all members of our communities?**

## NEXT STEPS FOR THE MSU/COMMUNITY COLLEGE COLLABORATIVE

Accepting the importance of collaborative efforts in leveraging the talents of a wide array of educational partners, these initial "next steps" are identified as a beginning:

- Build on the format and content of the January 30, 1998, MCCA Winter Inservice, with sessions for administrators, faculty, and staff of the community college.
- Provide regional workshops that address the specific needs of the regions in building learning colleges.
- Establish a network site for academic administrators and faculty to begin conversations about the learning college concept; provide a session for these academic administrators and faculty once each year to explore instructional directions in building learning colleges.
- Provide short-term workshops on change strategies, cultural change, curricular and delivery methods, and assessment outcomes.

## READING SUGGESTIONS

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Just as the conference was collaborative, so was the writing process. Thanks go to this group of individuals who took the detailed notes from the conference and produced (with hard work, creativity, and dedication) this monograph.

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# APPENDIX

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Don Burns, Montcalm
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Dick Thompson, Oakland
Ron Verch, Mid Michigan
Phil Ward, Glen Oaks
Jerry Welch, Monroe

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Kay Moore, Department of Educational Administration
Lorilee Sandmann, Director of Community Programming
Barbara Steidle, Assistant Provost of Undergraduate Ed and Academic Services

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Patsy Fulton-Calkins

## THE STRATEGIC THINKING TASK FORCE

The Strategic Thinking Task Force was one of the five task forces established through the collaborative effort of MSU and the 28 community colleges, with the task force composed of the following individuals from both the community college and MSU:

Christa Adams, Community College Co-Chair
Kay Moore, University Co-Chair
Marilyn Amey, MSU
Allen Arnold, Mott Community College
John Dirkx, MSU
Curtis Ivery, Wayne County Community College
Tim Jackson, MSU
Gunder Myran, Washtenaw Community College
Don Newport, Alpena Community College
Rick Pappas, Lake Michigan Community College
Lorilee Sandmann, MSU
Patsy Fulton-Calkins, Consultant, MSU

As the Strategic Thinking Task Force began its work, the discussions centered on the need for community college leadership growth and development. Compounding the complexity of change in the community college is the statistic that emerged from the study done by Fulton-Calkins with all community colleges. This study revealed that in the next three to eight years 48 percent of the full-time faculty and 50 percent of the administrators will be retiring. Cognizant of both forces (change and loss of leadership), the task force decided that the initial leadership session must address community college future directions.

This task force has proposed that an advisory board composed of community college presidents and MSU personnel be established, with the purpose of the board being to make recommendations for ongoing professional development offerings and to serve in an oversight role.

Other task forces, composed of community college presidents and MSU personnel, that were established are listed on the following page, along with the community college president and MSU co-chairpersons.

### Models and Student Support Systems Task Force

Pete Boyse, Delta, Co-Chair
Bob Church, Acting Vice Provost for University Outreach, MSU, Co-Chair
Isle Burke, Northwestern
Don Foster, Gogebic
Dorothy Franke, Kirtland
Al Lorenzo, Macomb
Andrew Mazzara, Henry Ford
Patrick McConeghy, MSU
James Miller, MSU
Philip Smith, MSU
Abel Sykes, Lansing

### MSU Courses on Community College Campuses Task Force

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Dave Briegel, Southwestern
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Dwight Link, Bay de Noc
Phil Smith, College of Social Science, MSU
Ron Verch, Mid Michigan

### Non-Credit Business, Industry and Non-Profit Task Force

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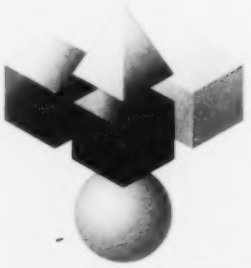
Myron Miller, Director, Executive Program Development, MSU, Co-Chair
Don Burns, Montcalm
Dick Calkins, Grand Rapids
Lee Howser, Jackson
Dick Thompson/Cheryl Kozell, Oakland



### System Concerns Task Force

Frank Marczak, Muskegon, Co-Chair
Bill Turner, Director, Admissions, MSU, Co-Chair
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